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United Missionary Conferences

MISSIONARY RESEARCH LIBRARY NEW YORK CITY

A UNITED PURPOSE

(Adopted by the Executive Committee at the opening of the Campaign)

"To co-operate with the local churches and all other Christian agencies in presenting anew our own and the world's need of Christ; the wealth of our resources for life in Him; and the call of God and the challenge of the present world situation for the continued development of foreign missions."

UNITED MESSAGE AND MOTIVE

Conferences will be conducted in twenty-nine important cities, during eleven weeks, under the Foreign Missions Conference of North America and the Federation of Woman's Boards of Foreign Missions of North America. More than eighty-four Foreign Mission Boards co-operate with united purpose through these organizations.

THE WORLD SITUATION

THE world situation has been immeasurably aggravated by the economic depression of the last four years. Aggressive Nationalism endangers the spirit of International Co-operation. Class warfare and racial hatreds have been intensified. Progress toward World Peace has been retarded.

Individuals, families, and churches are under severe pressure through unemployment, reduced incomes, and capital losses. Mission Boards have suffered grave reductions in income. This is an hour of critical emergency for the missionary enterprise as a whole. The Church and its God-given task ought to come first in Recovery, and not last. The favorable signs of business improvement encourage the friends of Missions to stop the retreat here and now.

UNITED MISSIONARY CONFERENCES
419 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK CITY

The following extracts from the Report of the Jerusalem Council, which was widely approved by the Christian Churches of the world, present a simple statement of some of the great convictions underlying the missionary enterprise of the Churches of Christ in the western world.

OUR CHRISTIAN MESSAGE

OUR message is Jesus Christ. He is the revelation of what God is and of what man through Him may become. He makes known to us God as our Father, perfect and infinite in love and in righteousness.

Jesus Christ, in His life and through His death and resurrection, has disclosed to us the Father, the Supreme Reality, as almighty Love, reconciling the world to Himself by the Cross, suffering with men in their struggle against sin and evil, bearing with them and for them the burden of sin, forgiving them as they, with forgiveness in their own hearts, turn to Him in repentance and faith, and creating humanity anew for an ever-growing, ever-enlarging, everlasting life.

We affirm that God, as Jesus Christ has revealed Him, requires all His children, in all circumstances, at all times, and in all human relationships, to live in love and righteousness . . . , in preparation for the coming of His Kingdom in its fulness.

The message of the Church to the world is and must always remain the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Gospel is the joyful message of redemption both here and hereafter, the gift of God to sinful man in Jesus Christ. Through His life and teaching, His call to repentance . . . , He has brought to us forgiveness of sins, and has revealed the fulness of the living God and His boundless love toward us. By the appeal of that love, shown in its completeness on the Cross, He summons us to the new life of faith, self-sacrifice, and devotion to His service and the service of men.

Because He Himself is the Gospel, the Gospel is the message of the Church to the world. The Gospel brings peace and joy to the heart, and produces in men self-denial, readiness for brotherly service, and compassionate love. It offers the supreme goal for the aspirations of youth, strength to the toiler, rest to the weary, and the crown of life to the martyr. The Gospel is the sure source of power for social regeneration.

Sympathizing with the anguish of our generation, with its longing for intellectual sincerity, social justice, and spiritual inspiration, the Church in the eternal Gospel meets the needs and fulfils the God-given aspirations of the modern world. Consequently, as in the past so also in the present, the Gospel is the only way of salvation. Thus, through His Church, the living Christ still says to men, "Come unto me! . . . He that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."

THE MISSIONARY MOTIVE

IF such is our message, the motive for its delivery should be plain. The Gospel is the answer to the world's greatest need. Its very nature forbids us to say that it may be the right belief for some but not for others. Either it is true for all, or it is not true at all.

Our true and compelling motive lies in the very nature of the God to whom we have given our hearts. Since He is love, His very nature is to share. Coming into fellowship with Christ we find in ourselves an overmastering impulse to share Him with others. We are constrained by the love of Christ and by obedience to His last command. He Himself said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly," and our experience corroborates it. He has become life to us. We would share that life.

We are assured that Christ comes with an offer of life to man and to societies and to nations. We believe that in Him the shackles of moral evil and guilt are broken from human personality and that men are made free, and that such personal freedom lies at the basis of the freeing of society from cramping custom and blighting social practices and political bondage, so that in Christ men and societies and nations may stand up free and complete.

We believe in a Christlike world. We know nothing better; we can be content with nothing less. We do not go to the nations called non-Christian, because they are the worst of the world and they alone are in need—we go because they are a part of the world and share with us in the same human need—the need of redemption from ourselves and from sin, the need to have life complete and abundant and to be remade after this pattern of Christ-likeness. We desire a world in which Christ will not be crucified but where His Spirit shall reign.

We believe that men are made for Christ and cannot really live apart from Him. Our fathers were impressed with the horror that men should die without Christ—we share that horror; we are impressed also with the horror that men should live without Christ.

Herein lies the Christian motive; it is simple. We cannot live without Christ and we cannot bear to think of men living without Him. We cannot be content to live in a world that is un-Christlike. We cannot be idle while the yearning of His heart for His brethren is unsatisfied.

Since Christ is the motive, the end of Christian missions is nothing less than the production of Christlike character in individuals and societies and nations through faith in and fellowship with Christ the living Saviour, and through corporate sharing of life in a divine society.

Christ is our motive and Christ is our end. We must give nothing less, and we can give nothing more.

OUR METHODS

Note: It is appreciated that each communion presents plans of its own to its churches. The following outline is suggested in which all may unite, loyally to sustain the missionary work of our churches.

1. It is unthinkable that in the days of Recovery ahead, church budgets should be increased without restoring missions to their fair share in the purpose and devotion of the church.

(**a**) Believing in the power of united prayer, as individuals and churches we would renew our purpose to pray daily for the progress of God's Kingdom, our missionaries and growing churches abroad.

(**b**) We call upon leaders to adopt the best modern methods, and in Church School, mid-week meeting and church worship, press the information and the inspiration of missionary progress upon all hearts.

(**c**) We face today a strategic opportunity to urge principles of sacrificial and proportionate stewardship upon individuals and churches. A fair share of our income (usually 10%) is the first step toward the consecration of our time, talents and wealth to God's service. Every church will be ambitious to devote a rising share of its budget to missions.

2. In the present emergency, churches will consider the best possible methods of restoring their missionary gifts:

(**a**) Hundreds of thousands of church members have been forced to abandon their subscriptions or heavily cut their gifts to both church support and missions. Such individuals will earnestly strive, at the earliest possible moment, to restore these by written notice to the church treasurer, and by regular gifts through missionary envelopes.

(**b**) Likewise, local churches which in recent years have cut down the missionary share of their budget, will plan soon to restore the fair share to missions, by action of the entire church body.

(**c**) There are special reasons why such action should be taken in these autumn months in the effort to maintain the missionary giving for 1933 at least equal to that for 1932. If returning prosperity has blessed a church or a community, pastors and leaders interested in missions will all use every endeavor under these new conditions to raise an emergency missionary fund to "Stop the Drop" recorded thus far in 1933. This is the hour for such an effort. We may well pray that the United Missionary Conferences may be blessed as the occasion of stirring renewed missionary purpose in the hearts of thousands.

Amid the wreck of past hopes and profound thanksgiving for the return of confidence and spiritual courage to millions of our fellow countrymen, the churches of Christ in America move forward together to exalt the Way of Jesus. Under the stimulus of renewed self-surrender and continuing prayer, the churches commit themselves to sacrificial stewardship and to courageous advance that the institutions for the training of leaders on our mission fields may be sustained, that our missionaries may be continued in their service without interruption, that Righteousness may be spread through the earth and that the Gospel of Christ may lift the lives and win the souls of all mankind.